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“Prepare to Phil the Agony of Dunphear”

Translation of Puns in the Finnish Subtitles of the Situation Comedy

Modern Family

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UNIVERSITY OF VAASA**School of Marketing and Communication****Author:** Enni Valli**Master's Thesis***"Prepare to Phil the Agony of Dunpheat"*Translation of Puns in the Finnish Subtitles of the Comedy Series *Modern Family***Degree:** Master of Arts**Programme:** Language expertise in specialized society**Date:** 2020**Supervisor:** Helen Mäntymäki

ABSTRACT

Tekstittämiseen liittyy paljon aika- ja tilarajoituksia, joita kääntäjän täytyy ottaa huomioon etenkin kääntäessään sanaleikkejä. Huumoria kääntäessä kääntäjän tulee säilyttää sama viesti kuin alkuperäisessä, joten kääntäjän on oltava hyvin luova. Kaikkea lähdetekstissä olevaa ei kuitenkaan voi kääntää kohdekieleen samalla tavalla, koska myös kulttuuriin liittyvät ongelmat on otettava huomioon. Tekstitykset ja alkuperäinen dialogi ovat katsojan saatavilla samaan aikaan, joten tekstitykset voivat saada osakseen paljon kritiikkiä etenkin niiltä katsojilta, jotka osaavat lähdekieltä hyvin. Katsojat eivät kuitenkaan tunne kaikkia tekstittämiseen liittyviä rajoituksia, sillä kaikkea ei aina ole mahdollista kääntää.

Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa tutkin amerikkalaisen komediasarjan *Moderni Perhe* sanaleikkejä ja niiden käännöksiä. Lähempään tarkasteluun valitsin yhden päähenkilöistä, Phil Dunphyn, joka käyttää puheessaan paljon sanaleikkejä, ja niissä usein omaa nimeään. Tutkielman tarkoituksena oli selvittää, mitä käännösstrategioita sanaleikkien käännöksissä on käytetty, miten suomenkielinen käännös eroaa alkuperäisestä sanaleikistä sekä miten huumori on säilytetty suomenkielisissä käännöksissä. Hypoteesini oli, että suurinta osaa sanaleikeistä ei ole käännetty suoraan sanaleikiksi, mutta että niissä on säilytetty huumori tavalla tai toisella.

Tutkin tässä tutkielmassa homonymiaa, homofoniaa, paronymiaa, homografiaa, rekursiivisia sanaleikkejä sekä keksittyjä sanoja. Ilmeni, että käytetyin sanaleikin muoto materiaalissani oli keksityt sanat, ja vähiten käytetty taas homografia. Tutkielmassani käytin Dirk Delabastitan käännösstrategioita sanaleikeille. Käytetyin käännösstrategia oli sanaleikin kääntäminen sanaleikiksi, ja tätä strategiaa käytettiin eniten paronymian kohdalla. Toiseksi eniten sitä käytettiin keksittyjen sanojen ja homonymian kohdalla. Hypoteesini ei osoittautunut oikeaksi, sillä tätä strategiaa käytettäessä sanaleikki on käännetty sanaleikiksi.

KEYWORDS: Translating, subtitling, puns, wordplay, humour, cultural issues

1 INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I analyse the subtitles of the American comedy series *Modern Family* (2009–2020). I focus on the wordplay of one of the main characters called Phil Dunphy who uses a great number of puns and other kinds of wordplay in the show and tends to use his own name in the puns sometimes. I chose Phil based on the fact that he uses puns the most in the series. Moreover, I think the use of his own name is clever and funny. Since the English and Finnish languages are very different, the task for the translator to translate puns can be very challenging. The languages belong to different language families, Finnish belongs to Finno-Ugric language and English belongs to Germanic language. They have different rules in grammar and very different pronunciations in words and not many words are alike. It is exciting to see what kind of translations the translators have come up with for these puns of Phil because they suit very well the English language but are quite difficult to transfer into Finnish. The use of the puns is clever in the way that Phil uses his own name in the words that would sound alike, such as *feel* – *Phil*. The words are pronounced similarly and in English these kinds of puns are funny but as mentioned, challenging to transfer into the Finnish language in the same way or in the way that they would preserve the humour. For example, the word “feel” means “tuntea” in Finnish and it does not resemble the name Phil, hence it needs some other approach and more creativity to translate it. The other characters of the series are also funny, but their humour consists mainly of sarcasm.

My aim in this thesis is to analyse how the puns are translated into Finnish and how the translations differ from the original, and what strategies are used in translating the puns. My research questions are: 1) In what way the humour is preserved in the target language and in how many cases, if preserved at all? 2) What kind of translation strategies are used when translating the puns? My hypothesis is that most of the puns are not directly translated with a pun but preserve the humour still in some way. The reason for this is the above mentioned differences in the two languages.

The subject of this thesis differs from other similar studies in that I only chose to focus on one of the main characters of the series and his puns. There are quite many other kinds of previous studies about subtitles and verbal humour. To mention a few, Jonna Elomaa (2012) has studied the transfer of verbal humour in audiovisual translation in the movie *Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*. She compared the subtitles and the dubbing of the movie and her hypothesis was that dubbing would allow the use of more creative translation strategies than subtitles. However, the creative translation strategies turned out to be the most least used strategies in both dubbing and subtitling, and a great amount of humour was even left out of the translations as a whole. Kirsi Hyyryläinen (2017) studied the verbal humour in the subtitles of the series *How I Met Your Mother* of the first and third seasons. She studied what are the most common translation strategies in translating humour and how much is it possible to transfer the source text humour into the target text. Her hypothesis was that James S. Holmes' retentive strategy would be the most obvious choice for the translators and the hypothesis was right. Hyyryläinen studied the most typical wordplays and allusions and their subcategories. In the University of Vaasa there was no MA thesis that was written about *Modern Family*. However, in the University of Eastern Finland Harri Finer (2019) has written a thesis about *Modern Family*. The thesis was also about translating wordplay in Netflix subtitles, so it is quite similar to my study. He studied the subtitling of wordplay from the seasons 2 and 3 and he wanted to find out what translation strategies have been used and how the multimodality of a television programme has been considered in the translations. His hypothesis was that there can be compromises found in the translations, since it would be impossible to preserve all the information from all the different channels in the translations. The compromises could be found in many of the translations.

The viewer of a comedy series sees only the final result of the translation of puns. But every translation task requires the research of the subject and the background before starting to translate. The translator searches for information and reviews about the show or reads books that tell about the subject of the show. For example a pun can include entities that are not familiar to the translator so it is necessary to look for information so the translation will fill its purpose. In addition to translating, the translators have to time

the translation. The text needs to follow the image and the rhythm of the speech and the reader must have enough time to read the subtitle. The meaning of the translation of puns is to help the viewer and to support the experience. If an expression is translated incorrectly it will disconnect the viewers thought from the show. It is crucial that the structure of the sentences are clear for the viewer to understand. Moreover, the translator needs to take into consideration the audience and think about the vocabulary s/he will use. Sometimes the feeling and the emotion of the show might be secondary because the characters speak very quickly, and the translator needs to summarise what is said. Everything does not fit into the screen, and this thesis will go further into these issues in more detail later. Additionally, in Finnish translations usually the F word is avoided, but especially in fiction a slang can be used, such as “ootsä”. (Hyvärinen 2007, my translation)

A problem with subtitling and especially when the subtitle includes a pun, is that it constantly jumps ahead of the dialog. Thus, fast readers are able to predict lines before they are even said. (Gottlieb 1994: 102) This is absolutely true since usually the viewer sees the subtitle before the character has even yet uttered the joke. The subtitle stays on the screen for a certain amount of time and is on the screen as a whole already before the character has finished its sentence. Because of this the viewer can already laugh to a joke even though nothing is said yet. Schröter (2005: 28) reminds us that in subtitles, the original dialogue is always present and accessible to the viewer. This can affect the content of the subtitles especially with those viewers who already know the source language well and can understand it even without the subtitles. Gottlieb (1994: 102) also has the same view and says that because subtitles include the original language as well, they are open to criticism for everyone who know the source language. The viewer can be critical towards the subtitler because s/he hears the pun in the original language and understands it, so, when the subtitle does not correspond to the joke, the viewer might get confused or as said, critical towards the translation. Obviously, the viewers may not be familiar with all the restrictions and cultural issues that deal with translating and the strategies the translators must use. That is the reason why the viewers can sometimes

feel that a pun or some other line was translated incorrectly or very poorly, while there actually has not been any other choice to translate it.

This thesis will discuss wordplay and puns, explain what they are and give examples of the puns from different categories in the material. The thesis will cover comedy genre and situation comedy which is the main focus of this study. A discussion of audiovisual translation and its problems and restrictions in that field will follow. Cultural issues related to translating are explained as well, and after that the translation strategies offered by Dirk Delabastita. Furthermore, a discussion of Netflix and its own rules for subtitling follows, and finally, an analysis of the puns found in the material. After the analysis some concluding thoughts are given. In this thesis in examples the concepts source text and target text are abbreviated to ST and TT.

1.1 Material

I chose altogether four seasons from *Modern Family*, seasons 2, 5, 6 and 7. From these seasons I collected the puns from Phil and found 40 cases of them altogether. The material was gathered on Netflix. The series has 11 seasons and all of them have aired in Finland as well, but only 9 of them are available on Netflix, however not all of the seasons were available there at the time of when starting this thesis, since Netflix sometimes removes the seasons. Each of the season has between 22–24 episodes that last approximately 20–22 minutes. I chose to study the seasons 2, 5, 6 and 7 from Netflix, because of the limited availability of the seasons. Since *Modern Family* does not include a laugh track, it is more challenging to find the puns in the series. However, normally when Phil utters a pun, he emphasises the words and says them in the way the viewer can identify that there is a pun, and he often laugh himself to his own jokes, so it makes it easier to find the puns. Also, because the series is filmed with documentary style, after a pun Phil can glance at the camera which also makes it clearer that he made a joke. Moreover, I have watched the series many times before so also this made it easier for me to recognize the puns.

As mentioned, I study the subtitles on Netflix. Netflix is a streaming service and it translates movies and series into over 20 languages. At times, the translations on Netflix are quite poorly done since the translators are not usually professionals. It often seems that they do not understand the puns or do not even try to be creative or they are not interested to put a lot of time or effort into the translations. This can affect the translations of the puns in the material of this thesis as well, although nowadays it is possible to take the HERMES test to get a job as a translator on Netflix, even though the translator has no education in translating. The HERMES test is a first online subtitling and translation test. Previously there was no standard test for the translators of Netflix, so it is possible that the translations have been even worse if the translators did not take any tests before getting a job as a Netflix translator. The test is designed to be extremely scalable and consists of thousands of random combinations of questions so that two tests are never the same. The test includes multiple choice questions within a time limit, and it also measures the candidate's understanding of English such as the skills to translate idiomatic phrases into their target language, identify linguistic and technical errors and finally, to subtitle expertly. After the test Netflix has a great view of the skills of the candidate and it this information is used to match projects with high quality language resources. (The Netflix Tech Blog 2017) There are also tasks of subtitling, that includes 10 videos with questions for each of them and two short videos where the applicant needs to translate the original language into the selected language. After completing the test, it is reviewed and graded within 10 business days. The applicant needs to get at least 80 % of the test to get a position at Netflix. (Trnslate 2017)

1.2 Method

I watched the seasons by focusing on Phil and his puns, and every time a wordplay occurred, I gathered the original English line and the Finnish translation. After gathering the puns from the seasons, the original puns were categorized into different kind of categories of puns that are homophony, homonymy, homography, paronymy, recursive

pun, and in addition to these, nonce word. In the analysis the puns are under these categories and the English version and the Finnish translations are compared to see what is actually done to the puns, that is, what translation strategies are used in translating. Slips of the tongue as well as idioms are not included in the thesis since I wanted to focus more on the puns. Homophony is a case where two words are written differently but their pronunciation is the same. Homonymy is when two words have an identical spelling and pronunciation, but they have different meanings. Homography happens when usually a pair of words are written in the same way, but they are pronounced differently, or they can be a noun – verb pair for example, such as *transfer* – *transfer* or *use* – *use*, and the words have different meanings. Paronymy occurs when the words are nearly but not quite identical in spelling and pronunciation. (Delabastita 1993: 79) Recursive pun is a pun where you need to understand the first part of the joke in order to be able to understand the second one (Literary Devices 2020). Finally, nonce word means a word that is made for only one occasion and is not taken into use generally (Merriam-Webster 2020). These categories will be discussed in more detail with examples in chapter 3. The translation strategies that are used in the analysis are Delabastita's (1996: 134) translation strategies. There are eight of these strategies and they are as follows: pun → pun, which means the pun is translated with a pun, pun → non-pun is when the translation does not include a pun, pun ST → pun TT occurs when the pun is transferred as it is into the target text, pun → related rhetorical device uses some other verbal humour than a pun, pun → zero means that the part with a pun is omitted as a whole, non-pun → pun is when there is not a pun in the original but the translator adds a pun into the target text, zero → pun is when there is not any verbal humour at all but the translator adds a pun to the target text and finally, editorial techniques means notes from the translator. These strategies are explained in more detail with examples in chapter 4.5. Next, the thesis explains comedy genre and situation comedy.

2 COMEDY AND SITUATION COMEDY

In this section comedy genre and different types of comedies are explained. After that, a section of situation comedy follows which is the focus in this thesis. The definition of situation comedy is presented such as different types of situation comedies as well. Finally, a chapter of *Modern Family* explains what the series is all about and also about the documentary style which is used in the series.

2.1 Comedy

Comedy is a form of entertainment that is meant to be humorous, and the goal is to make the audience laugh. There are different types of comedy, such as innuendo, parody, satire, irony, sarcasm, farce and puns, which is my main focus of the thesis. Innuendo is a veiled remark about someone or something that indirectly hints about something bad or impolite. Parody is an imitation of a writer, artist, subject or genre and it makes fun about it usually in an exaggerated way. Satire is a genre of literature that uses wit to criticise and ridicule problems of society and government for example. Irony is a contrast or incongruity between expectations for a situation and what is reality, for example a difference between the surface meaning of something and its underlying meaning. Sarcasm means mocking, ironically or in bitter contempt to demonstrate foolishness on the part of the speaker. Lastly, farce is a light-hearted comedy that centres around a ridiculous plot involving exaggerated events. Different cultures and eras affect what type of comedy is the most popular at a time. (Literary Devices 2020)

2.1.1 Situation comedy

Comedies normally imitate real life and people like to relax watching other people's normal daily lives. Watching comedies is a way to escape from one's own life for a moment. In sitcoms the humour develops from the communicative situations, where the

humour rises spontaneously from the different situations of the series and the effect of it is laughter. (Wamsler 2007) The abbreviation sitcom comes from the word situation comedy. This kind of show is aired weekly, has a regular cast and the episodes typically take place in the same location. A sitcom episode usually lasts approximately 20–24 minutes. The show is filmed in front of a live audience or the laughter and applause are added later. Although, this is not the case with *Modern Family* since it does not include a laugh track at all. Sitcoms include a great amount of verbal plays, funny and unexpected situations or problems that could happen to anyone. The humour in a sitcom arises from playing around with the comic possibilities of the characters who communicate with each other in that situation. (Ross 1998: 91, quoted in Wamsler 2007) Thus, sitcom depends on the context in which the humour is performed. Almost every sitcom begins with a brief presentation, usually with one scene, about the show's topics before the theme song comes on. A sitcom depends on traditional stereotypes and happenings and jokes that occur frequently. (Wamsler 2007)

The golden age of American humour was in the 1920s (Goldstein 1999: 244, quoted in Wamsler 2007). The comedy genre originally comes from the US and at first it was developed to the radio in 1922 (Mack 2002: 6 quoted in Wamsler 2007). Family sitcoms became very popular in the 1950s and in 1960s the genre started to play on television. The first US sitcom aired in 1947 and was called *Mary Kay and Johnny*. It dealt with domestic tales of newlyweds in New York. (Guinness World Records 2020) The show called *I Love Lucy* (1951) is one of the first sitcoms, and it deals with the problems of a woman's emancipation. (Wamsler 2007) *Bachelor Father* (1957) was a sitcom about a single-parent who raises his children and dates at the same time (Marc 1989: 78, quoted in Wamsler 2007). *The Brady Bunch* (1969) dealt with the life of a patchwork family (Wamsler 2007). In the 90s there were a lot of popular sitcoms such as *Seinfeld* (1990–1998), *Frasier* (1993–2004) and *Friends* (1994–2004), and in the 2000s for example: *Everybody Loves Raymond* (1996–2005) and *Will & Grace* (1998–present) (Sitcoms Online). In Finland there are not many situation comedies. *Tankki täyteen* (1978) is the oldest situation comedy in Finland. Then there are few others such as *Isänmaan toivot*

(1998), *Kummeli* (1991), *Kyllä isä osaa* (1994), *Kumman kaa* (2003), and *Pasila* (2007) which is an animation show. (IMDb 2020)

In the 50s the social and political conditions changed in America, as did the focus of sitcoms. The sitcoms were filled by marriage or they were domestic sitcoms like the one mentioned already, *I love Lucy*, that expressed a normal family life and the normative husband and wife gender roles. In the 70s and the 80s workplace sitcoms became popular. These shows were for example *M*A*S*H* (1972–1983) and *Cheers* (1982–1993) which included a more sophisticated, clever, and humorous dialog. The workplace sitcoms introduced a new kind of “family” and they were the most successful subgenre of television comedy. After the workplace-sitcom became successful, in the 90s a new sitcom type was developed, and this was urban ensemble-sitcom which means there is a group of people who are not related and all individuals of the group are important, and it presented the cynic big city life which focused primarily on a group of *Friends*. When the Americans moved back into the cities closer to their jobs, sitcom characters also moved into the cities. (Sander 2014: 31)

2.1.2 Different types of situation comedy

Taflinger (1996) defines three types of situation comedies. They are action comedy, domestic comedy and drama comedy. Action comedy or actcom is the most common form of situation comedy on television (88 %). In actcoms the emphasis is on the action itself rather than on characterization or thought. Actcoms include mistakes, misunderstandings, attempts to influence the behaviour of the other characters, some unforeseen circumstances and so on which all of disturb the status quo. Actcom is a basic form of comedy and the idea is to make the audience laugh.

Domestic comedy, domcom, is the second most common form of sitcom on television (11,5 %). It is a character-based situation comedy. The first domcom was *Father Knows Best* (1954). Domcom usually tries to create an actual feeling of family among the characters, and the humour usually evolves through the family warmth. Less emphasis in

domcoms is placed on the misunderstandings but more on the actual personal problems, characters' emotions and relationships with other people and society, and not so much in the action. (Taflinger 1996) *Modern Family* represents this category, since it revolves around the bonds of the families.

The third type of sitcom is drama comedy, dramedy. This is the rarest form of sitcom types, only 1 % on television. Dramedy is based on thought. This type of comedy is difficult to produce because it has to include 1) an excellent cast working together, 2) a clearly delineated sphere of activity for plots, and finally 3) brilliant writing. In dramedy the development of the characters and the physical action are important, and this type of comedy is not dedicated to laugh-a-minute action. (Taflinger 1996)

2.2 *Modern Family*

Modern Family is an American mockumentary style comedy series that has aired since 2009, but in Finland from 2011. Mockumentary means that the show is fiction but is filmed like a documentary (Harkness 2014). This documentary style will be discussed later in more detail in this chapter. In *Modern Family* there are three different families who are related, and they face trials and tribulations in their own unique and comedic ways (IMDb 2020). There is the family of Phil and Claire who have three children, Haley, Alex and Luke. Phil is a realtor and Claire has been a stay-at-home mom but is returning to work as the series continues. Haley is the oldest child. She is popular, not so smart or into school, always dating and a “bit of a teenybopper”. Alex is the smartest one, “kind of a nerd”, and she always works hard for school. Luke is the youngest and is a “goofy person” like his dad and a little “stupid”. Mitch and Cam are a gay couple with a daughter, Lily, whom they adopted from Vietnam. Mitch is Claire's brother. Jay, who is Claire and Mitch's father, has remarried with a gorgeous, younger, Colombian woman Gloria. Gloria has a son Manny from her previous marriage. Manny is the same age as Luke, but he is an old soul and almost a grown-up of his mind. Gloria and Manny live together with Jay

in his big fancy house because Jay has earned a lot of money by owning a closet company. All of the families spend a lot of time together and are close with each other.

As mentioned earlier, *Modern Family* is filmed with documentary style. This style is used in contemporary American comedy series increasingly in this past decade. Nowadays we know that the series such as *Modern Family* are fiction even though they have been filmed with documentary style, since this style is not about presenting the truth anymore. The single-camera approach was already tried in the 60s, but it became more popular in the late 90s. (Sander 2014: 1–3) The first single-camera sitcom aired in 1948 (*The Life of Riley*) but this style only became more popular from the 2000s. Single-camera sitcoms are the more common form nowadays because the filming is less restricting, since the locations can be easily moved. (Mills 2005, 2008 quoted in Sander 2014: 30) In *Modern Family* the scenes are filmed with a single handheld camera, changing camera angles, and moving with zooming and panning. In this type of filming the viewer gets to be closer with the family because mostly that is challenging to feel in another types of sitcoms where the production creates a static distance. (Sander 2014: 62–63)

The Office (UK version 2001–2003) was one of the first series to use the documentary style and the style in the series comes from the idea that a fictitious BBC documentary film team follows the staff and the manager since they need to close the branch because of downsizing. The presence of the camera is often recognized, and it brings a certain style with it since they are filming with a somewhat shaky camera that moves around the space and follows the action but also the more private sequences from sort of hidden positions. Furthermore, it regularly employs one-on-one interviews between one of the characters and the camera/implied interviewer. (Sander 2014: 36–37)

There are three typical situations how the camera moves in documentary style series, and these can be seen in *Modern Family* as well. First is the “interview situation”. In these scenes the interviewer is never heard or seen, but it is evident that the character sitting in front of the camera is answering to questions that are presented before the cut. This acts as a commentary on the surrounding scenes and as transitions between scenes. (Sander

2014: 39) The interviews sequences in *Modern Family* do not include handheld cameras, they do not use zoom nor shoot from different angles and these sections are not taped on the fly. These scenes are more staged and only the people who are interviewed are in the room. The scenes' idea is to tell the camera what they learned in each situation and are filmed after the events of the episode. The interview situation features only one person or a couple and the children are sometimes interviewed as well but not ever with their parents. (Sander 2014: 62–63) The second type is “acknowledging the camera within the situation”: the character makes sure the camera is filming him/her when telling a joke or doing something that will be funny or cool. Usually in *Modern Family* the characters glance the camera after they had made a joke or said something that makes another person leave the situation and so on. Additionally, they can look at the camera in those situations where they think that the feeling is awkward. From this we come to the third type which is “avoidance of interaction” where a character intends to hide a conversation or behaviour from the camera. (Sander 2014: 39) This can be seen in *Modern Family* in the way that after an awkward situation they glance the camera and leave, so the camera will not see them anymore.

The original concept of *Modern Family* included a character that would be behind the camera. That person would have been a Dutch filmmaker who had lived with the Pritchett's family, that is Jay, his ex-wife, and Mitch and Claire, 20 years earlier. Now he would return to the country and make a documentary about American families. The title for the show would have been “My American Family” and it would have been a reference for the Dutch character and made him a crucial part of the story. The team did not choose to take this road and it is uncertain why not, but they still kept the documentary style but left the person behind the camera out of the series. The creator of the series, Christopher Lloyd has said that the audience can create their own story about why the families are filmed and by who. (Saporito 2015)

Situation comedies always include a great deal of puns and other verbal humour. From this we can move onto look at different puns in the section below. In the next chapter the definition of wordplay and puns are given, such as examples of different puns that are present in the material.

3 DEFINING WORDPLAY AND PUNS

In this section wordplay and its definitions are explained, as well as the definitions of the different types of puns that are used in this thesis. Dirk Delabastita's definition of wordplay goes as follows:

Wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings (Delabastita 1996: 128).

Delabastita (1993:57) compares his definition to the definition of a pun by *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, which states as follows: "the use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings, or the use of two or more words of the same sound with different meaning, so as to produce a humorous effect; a play on words". Delabastita continues that a pun is based on a confrontation of linguistic forms and meanings. Furthermore, when a pun is viewed in the structure of natural language as well as in non-punning linguistic act, it is understood better. The humorous effect of a pun depends on the ambiguity of the word. These ambiguities occur mostly in homophones and homonyms. (Literary Devices 2020) Delabastita (2004: 602) mentions that in a pun the structure of language consists of many fundamental associations that connect different concepts to similar forms, which can break the stability of the whole system. In wordplay, the viewer or reader usually has both meanings available simultaneously (vertical wordplay) or they are presented with repetition in a context that triggers the "other" meaning (horizontal wordplay). In these cases the vagueness the reader encounters deals with the words as such and not with the relationship between the listener and the speaker. (Gottlieb 1997: 209).

In the Finnish language there are quite many homonymies that are used in everyday life. For example, the word "kuusi" which means both the number six and the tree called

spruce in English. Another example is the word “maali” that indicates “a goal” and also “a paint”. “Juuri” means “just now” and the “roots” of a tree for example. “Turkki” means both the Turkish language and a fur. “Vuori” means mountain and the inside of a coat. In Finnish many of the homonymies come from loan words. Furthermore, homonymies are possibly risen from example because of the letter “f” that is not such a common letter in Finnish and in the old loan words it was replaced with the letter “v”. The word “vaara” comes from the Swedish word “fara”, and this means danger and also a hill. (Laalo 2020: 220–221, my translation) In Finland wordplays are common in headlines as well as in product, campaign or event names. Sometimes they can be used in official texts as well, but this requires a good sense of style and it has to appeal to the readers of the text. Not all kind of humour suits to all kinds of official texts. (Kankaanpää 2004, my translation)

Schröter (2005: 155) states that wordplay and pun can be understood as synonyms, however they possess slightly different qualities. Pun is associated with a humorous effect, and it is possible to consider humour as an essential element of a prototypical pun, but it is not a requirement for wordplay necessarily. Wordplay is more abstract, and pun usually refers to a concrete instance of wordplay and can be seen as the subcategory of wordplay. (Mustonen 2016: 6) Delabastita (1993: 79) has categorized different puns, and in the material of this thesis homonymy, homophony, homography and paronymy were found. Next, the presentation of each of these categories with examples from the material follows. In addition to Delabastita’s categorization, the material includes nonce words and recursive puns. Slips of the tongue are not included even though they were humorous, but since they are not defined as wordplay and they are usually accidental unlike puns, they were left out. There were two cases of slips of the tongue in the material. As the main focus is on puns, idioms are not included in the material of this thesis either even though there were two one of them there. As a theory and to help with the analysis Delabastita’s translation strategies dealing with the changes that happen to a pun in a translation are used. They are pun → pun, pun → non-pun, pun ST → pun TT, pun → related rhetorical device, pun → zero, non-pun → pun, zero → pun, and editorial techniques. These strategies will be discussed in more detail later in chapter 4.5. The examples of the puns are given below. In the examples S stands for seasons and E for episode.

This first example is **homonymy**. It means that the words have identical written form and pronunciation, but their meaning is different (Delabastita 1993: 79). In this episode the homonymy occurs when Phil bought Jay a birthday card and reads it aloud. Jay is Claire's father, and Claire is Phil wife. So, Jay is the grandfather to their children.

(1) **Hip hip hip** hurray. Save the extra **hip**, you'll need it someday. (S2 E24)

Here, the card says "hip hip hip hurray" which is a typical expression also in Finnish (*hip hip hurraa*), but here, the card says "hip" three times, and recommends to save one "hip", as in a part of a body, because one would be needing it some day because of getting old. The pun arises from the fact that even though the two "hips" are written and pronounced the same, they have completely different meanings.

The second example of the categories is **homophony**. Homophony is when words have identical pronunciation, but their spelling and meaning is different (Delabastita 1993: 79). Homophony occurs in this case from the situation where Phil thought he made Claire mad and wants to apologize and brings her flowers.

(2) Sweetheart, about last night. Because I didn't listen with these two ears, I want to apologise with these **tu-lips**. (S7 E19)

"Tu-lips" sounds like "two lips" which is the idea in this scene. Phil wants to apologize verbally but also with the tulips he bought.

Homography means words that are identical in writing, but they are usually pronounced differently, and their meaning is different. They can also be a noun-verb pair. (Delabastita 1993: 79). The episode below is an example of homography. In this episode Phil is comforting one of his single mom customers.

(3) Lorraine, you are a beautiful woman with a lot to **offer**... **Should we make an offer?** (S5 E3)

In this homography the two “offer” are written and pronounced alike, however they have slightly different meanings. The first “offer” is a noun and the other one is a verb, which is typical in homographs.

The third example from the material is **nonce word**, and it means a word that is made up and used only in one particular occasion, and not taken into use generally. (Merriam-Webster 2020) Phil insist that Pharrel Williams stole his song and tells this to Gloria, and an old lady called Auntie Alice stole Gloria’s sauce recipe, so Phil insists they should go talk to her. Gloria is Jay’s wife, and Phil and Gloria had become good friends and they hang out with each other often.

- (4) I will not stand idly by while Auntie Alice **Pharrel Williamses** you.
(S7 E20)

Here the nonce word “Pharrel Williamses” is used as a verb indicating that Phil does not want that Auntie Alice does the same thing to Gloria as Pharrel Williams did to him.

This is an example of **paronymy** from the material. Paronymy means that the words are nearly the same but not quite identical in spelling and pronunciation (Delabastita 1993: 79) In this scene Phil answers the phone at home using his own name and the answer sounds like Philadelphia.

- (5) Mayor’s office, city of **Phila-Dunphy-a**. (S7 E19)

Phila-Dunphy-a is meant to sound alike with Philadelphia and Phil uses this expression to indicate that it is him, Phil Dunphy, on the phone, since the word includes his own name.

Lastly, an example of **recursive pun**. It is a pun that requires an understanding of the first half of the joke in order to be able to understand the second part (Literary Devices 2020).

Phil and Claire are talking about how Phil got Claire to himself, and Claire says: “only because you were wearing a feather ring”.

(6) It wasn’t a feather. It was a **dreamcatcher**. And **it worked**. (S6 E7)

In this scene Phil uses the word “dreamcatcher” in two senses. Claire says that he had a feather ring and Phil clarifies that in fact it was a dreamcatcher. If the first part of the scene would stand alone, it would not include a pun or have a double meaning but since he says “and it worked” the meaning comes clear. The dreamcatcher caught Claire, who is the dream.

Translating humour can be very difficult, but translators usually have their ways to come up with a solution. When translating, a pun can change from the source language to the target language in many ways. (Vandaele 2011: 181) From this we come to the translation strategies that are used in this thesis to analyse the material. The strategies are explained in more detail in the next part of the thesis in chapter 4.5 as mentioned.

4 TRANSLATING WORDPLAY AND PUNS

Roman Jakobson (1959: 233) has defined three different types of translation. *Intralingual* translation is the rephrasing in the same language, *interlingual* translation means translating from one language to another, and *intersemiotic* translation means translating to another medium. Hatim and Munday (2004: 6 quoted in Munday 2009: 7) on the other hand define translation as “the process of transferring a written text from source language to target language, conducted by a translator, in a specific socio-cultural context”.

Eugene Nida (2006: 11) states that translating demands specialized skills from a translator, and additionally, an aesthetic sensitivity. Skilled translators must recognize the closest natural equivalent of a text. A translator has to create a text with the same purpose in the target text as in the source text. The translator has to consider the needs of the target audience before any abstract theories of faithfulness and make sure to produce the same function that the source text has. (Bassnett 2014: 148) When a text includes certain unique forms of language, the translator should provide something parallel in the target language. This applies to puns as well. Puns can include words or expressions that are only familiar to the source culture and the translator needs to look for equivalents or some other replacement for these expressions. Cultural issues will be discussed later in chapter 4.2.

While Delabastita argues that wordplay is not untranslatable, it is obvious that verbal humour can either be easily translatable or very resistant (Vandaele 2011: 182). Gottlieb (1997: 226) also agrees that wordplay is not untranslatable. He goes on to state that nearly all items of wordplay are translatable, even in a genre that is semantically and semiotically complicated such as the mix of stand-up comedy and punning commercials. Wordplay uses the natural structure of the source language and includes certain characteristics of that language so that it can be difficult – sometimes even impossible – to find equivalents in the target language. Wordplay creates linguistic problems of translatability since in puns there is a contrast between different meanings and the formal similarity (Delabastita 1996: 128). Furthermore, linguistic structure affects the technical possibilities in translating wordplay. Understanding what translators have to deal with when translating

wordplay and how they deal with it involves many factors, such as textual functions, genre conventions, translation norms, cultural taboos, poetics, and ideology. (Delabastita 2004: 600)

Interlingual asymmetry indicates that every language is an independent system and “we cannot expect that the asymmetry between its signs and the extralinguistic entities and their conceptualizations will reflect in identical pattern across languages”. Languages are different in their semantic structure. Furthermore, a word class or a grammar class may occupy in the source language and target language systems to same extent. (Alexieva 1997: 141) Because of this interlingual asymmetry puns present a great amount of inequivalence in translation. This happens because both the formal similarity between words and the diversity of meanings in the same word do not usually match between different languages. This is the case in the English and the Finnish language. Moreover, for this reason puns require a broader range of linguistic manoeuvring than other translation problems and the pun’s acceptability depends on the standards of the polysystem (Delabastita 1993: 293, quoted in D. Sanderson 2009: 125), which means a multiple system and a system of several different systems intersecting and partly overlapping with each other, using different options simultaneously, still functioning as one structured entity but with independent members. (Even-Zohar 2005: 4, quoted in Kruger 2012: 96) If the translator wants the target text to become an important part of the target culture, the text needs to be adjusted to the standards of that culture (Delabastita 1993: 293, quoted in D. Sanderson 2009: 125).

The next chapters will discuss audiovisual translating. A short definition of dubbing is given, yet the main focus is on subtitling as mentioned. The chapters cover the restrictions and challenges in subtitling and subtitling humour as well as some cultural references that the translators need to consider. Furthermore, a chapter of translating humour will follow and finally an explanation of Delabastita’s translation strategies that are used in the analysis.

4.1 Audiovisual translating

Audiovisual translating, also known as AVT, refers to the translation of programmes that include many aspects in addition to the verbal aspect that affects the communication process. The fact that there are different layers of the visual and audio channels makes the translator's task challenging in this field. Subtitling is the most used mode to translate audiovisual programmes, because it is cheap and fast. (Diaz Cintas 2010: 344) In this thesis the focus is on subtitling as mentioned above, and it is defined in more detail in the subchapter 4.1.2, but first a short definition of dubbing is presented below.

4.1.1 Dubbing

Audiovisual translating includes also dubbing, which is a mode that is not so common in the Nordic countries, and when used, it is mostly in children's movies and in animations. Dubbing simply means that the original speech is replaced with the speech of the target language. The voice track tries to follow as closely as possible the timing, phrasing and lip-movements of the original dialogue. The goal is to make the dialogue in the target language to look as if the original characters were speaking. (Chiaro 2009: 144) It depends on the viewer's native language and culture what way an image is interpreted. An important issue to think about is whether the visual cultural signs impact the new soundtrack of the dubbed version. (Pettit 2009: 50) In dubbing, the actors can use intonation, volume and vocal pitch to compensate the changes of the oral features (Pettit 2009: 55).

Dubbing is used especially in France, Spain, Germany and Italy. In the Nordic countries usually the people learn English very well in school, so dubbing is not needed. The decision to dub depends also from the country's movie-going culture. Dubbing is however approximately 10 times more expensive than subtitling. A good dubbing must be creative, and the technical processes require plenty of time and great talent. (IndieWire 2020)

4.1.2 Subtitling

Subtitling is defined by Gottlieb (2001b: 15) as the replacing of a verbal message in filmic media with a different language with one or more lines of written text that is presented on the screen in sync with the original verbal message. Subtitling means that the translator provides the verbal message in writing into a target language of the original spoken message, and also other verbal information that is conveyed visually (letters, banners) or aurally (lyrics, voices off). Subtitling is an addition to the original programme, and it remains complete in the target culture. Subtitlers must come up with solutions that create the right interaction and take into consideration the fact that viewers must read the written text at a given speed while watching the programme. (Diaz Cintas 2010: 344) Subtitling flows with the speech, jumps at frequent intervals and allows the next part to be read. Gottlieb (1994: 103) reminds that in subtitling, there should not be any accidental words, and the translator should always test even the great ideas against alternative solutions. Usually there is more than one solution to a subtitling problem. However, there are even more solutions that miss the target. This can happen in puns since there may not be any equivalents in the target language and the translator does not have many options to translate the pun, so it is possible the puns lose their humour in many cases.

Subtitling is either vertical or diagonal. Vertical subtitling changes the speech into writing in the same language, while diagonal subtitling changes the speech in the source language into writing in the target language (see Figure 1). (Gottlieb 1994: 104) Naturally, this thesis focuses on diagonal subtitling. When the speech is spontaneous, the dialogue can include pauses, false starts, self-corrections, interruptions, unfinished sentences and “grammatically unacceptable” constructions, slips of the tongue, ambiguities, people talking at the same time, indistinct pronunciation, dialects, and the list goes on. Nevertheless, not every spoken utterance needs to be put down in writing. For example all of the above or for instance greetings and repetitions can be left untranslated. (Gottlieb 1994: 104-107) The translation of all of those little utterances could not even be possible due to all the restrictions and limitations in subtitling. These restrictions are mentioned in the next chapter.

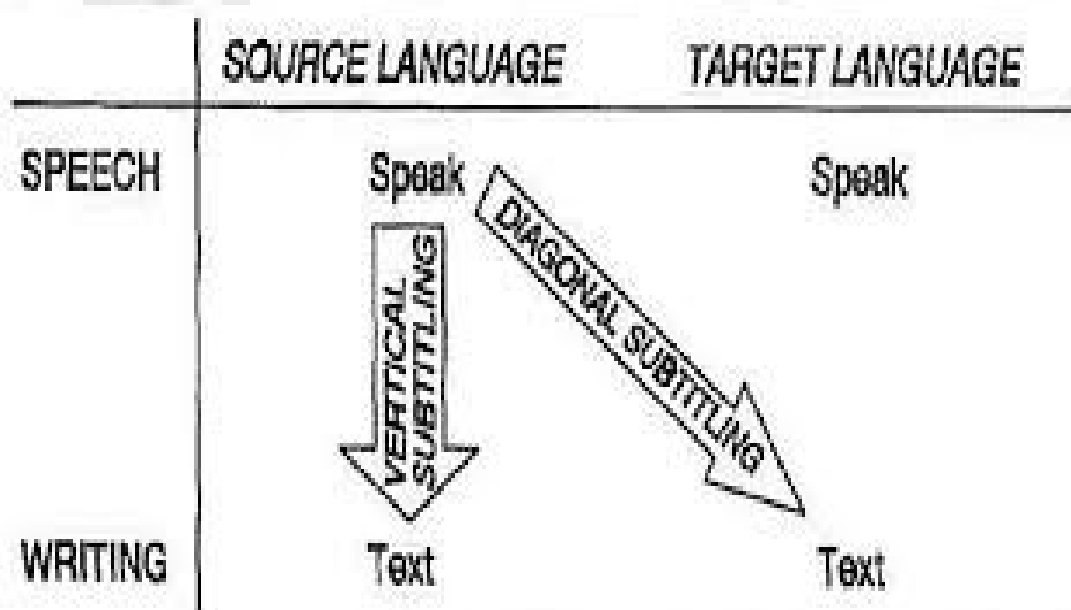


Figure 1. Vertical and diagonal subtitling (Gottlieb 1994: 104)

4.1.3 Restrictions and challenges in subtitling

The limit for subtitles on the screen is maximum two lines, and they are placed horizontally at the bottom of the screen. The time the subtitle is on the screen depends on the speed of the original dialogue and on the reading speed of the viewers as well. The “6 second rule” is typically the best method. (Diaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 96–99, quoted in Diaz Cintas 2010: 345) In addition, the two lines should not be more than 35 characters each so that the subtitle can be comfortably read in these six seconds. Subtitles should not stay on the screen less than one second (and not more than 6) so the viewer has time to read it. (Diaz Cintas 2010: 345)

Unless the characters speak very slowly, reduction can be used. Reductions of the original dialogue can be partial, meaning that it is vital, and total, when only part of the message is deleted. In both cases, the subtitler must make sure that the information is relevant, and they do not omit any crucial information from the source text. Although subtitlers cannot

translate absolutely everything that is said, they need to preserve the meaning of the original in the target text. (Diaz Cintas 2010: 346) Gottlieb (1998/2001: 247, quoted in Diaz Cintas 2010: 346) states that in subtitling, the speech act is always in focus. The effect of the translation is always the most important thing, rather than individual lexical elements.

There are many factors that can challenge the translator in subtitling. The dialogue change between the characters might be too fast and therefore difficult to comprehend, or there can be an unknown dialect in use, sociolectal variations, the speech can overlap or there might be some music or other noises that disturb the conversation just to name a few. (Diaz Cintas 2009: 4) Occasionally the translator might come across some problematic passages and it is possible that the script includes several unclear parts. For instance, there can be written “inaudible” or “???” , or there can even be a misinterpretation of what is said. Many programs come without a script, and in those cases, the subtitlers must count on their own ears or guess what is being said in the programme. At times they need to consult a native speaker. The guessing and only using one’s own ears requires a great amount of time and effort. (Gottlieb 1994: 108)

There is also the issue of visual segmentation that deals with cuts and camera moves. Cutting follows the rhythm of the speech and mostly the characters pause when it is grammatically correct and acceptable. Nevertheless, it is problematic if the changes in the image and dialog are not simultaneous. Then the subtitler prefers rhetorical segmentation. Subtitles tend to “cut” where the speaker takes a pause to breathe. These pauses normally occur at the time of 5–6 seconds, which is the standard time for a subtitle to stay on the screen as mentioned above. If an utterance covers more than one segment, the subtitle needs to maintain a coherent thread. The titles should be cohesive if the dialog is, and the subtitler should not “spill the beans” by revealing a point ahead, for example an answer to a dramatic question. (Gottlieb 1994: 110). Gottlieb (1994: 108) goes on to state that even if a translator has great translation skills and is fluent in the target language, it does not automatically mean that one is an excellent subtitler.

Different genres require different kind of subtitles. An informative TV programme needs to have exact subtitles, while other types of programmes allow for more freedom in the subtitles, such as sitcoms. Thus, when subtitling facts such as documentaries, it is vital for the translator to find the right terms. In fiction, the style of the subtitles is more important. Subtitling facts is similar to adding captions to a picture as in newspapers and subtitling fiction is more about recreating lines. However, the subtitler needs to make compromises because the subtitles must have loyalty to the image or to the viewers. (Gottlieb 1994: 111)

The transition from oral to written includes many challenges, for example whether non-standard speech, such as accents and informal features can be effectively produced in writing. Usually this type of speech is neutralised in the subtitles. Additionally, swearwords and taboo expressions can be sensitive to translating since they can be considered more offensive when seen on the screen rather than just heard. Because of the presence of the original soundtrack and the subtitles and especially when translating a well-known language such as English, subtitling is exposed to analysis of anyone who knows the source language, as mentioned earlier in this thesis. In this case the subtitles should follow the syntactic structure of the source text in order to strengthen the synchronisation and to preserve the chronology of events of the source text. (Diaz Cintas 2010: 346) The task of a translator is very difficult especially when dealing with the translation of identities and stereotypes. Phil is a funny and goofy person and this needs to be considered in the translation process, since his personality is important to the show and his puns are a great part of his identity, they make him who he is. There is always a risk that the target language does not possess the same locations and dislocations of identity as the source language. (Diaz Cintas 2009: 9) Puns can also include taboo language and that makes the translator's task difficult as well. For example in many series the characters use sexual references or joke about that subject which can be a taboo in some cultures, and it has to be taken into consideration when translating into those languages and cultures. If a sitcom includes swearwords, they normally are translated with the light ones, such as "hitto" which is not considered to be the worst swearword. As mentioned earlier, typically the "F word" is avoided in the translations.

4.1.4 Subtitling wordplay and its difficulties

In many countries subtitling is the preferred mode of TV and film translation. Wordplay on TV can refer to text-internal entities or text-external entities. The first one means that everything that is said is shown or written on the screen. The latter means for example knowledge of people, social events or cultural institutions that the audience possesses. (Gottlieb 1997: 209–210)

Television is a polysemiotic communication, which means that a communication employs two or more channels of discourse. In television there are four of these discourses and they are picture, written text, dialogue and music or other sound effects. Wordplay can be expressed through dialogue, through dialogue combined with non-verbal visual information or through written text on the screen that can be displays (e.g. headings and street signs) or captions (e.g. titles, verbal graphics). It is very unlikely that two different languages such as Finnish and English will have identical-sounding or identically spelled expressions in the same semantic field. This can be seen in the material of the thesis since the puns in English are difficult to transfer as the same into Finnish since we do not have much words that would be written the same or would have the same meanings. The translator must be creative when translating puns. However, literal or metaphorical expressions in one language might have counterparts that have the same qualities in other languages. (Gottlieb 1997: 211–212)

Many comedy series are recorded in a front a live audience, so the humorous situations are indicated with laughter coming from the audience. The laughter can also be added afterwards if there is no live audience, but it is still an essential part of the series. This means that the subtitler – even without a sense of humour – will know where there is verbal humour used in the programme. (Gottlieb 1997: 216). Yet, in *Modern Family* there is no laugh track at all as mentioned earlier, so that might make the translators job harder because s/he needs to be aware at all times and focus what really is wordplay and when it does occur in the show. Sometimes the wordplay can be lost, though. And this is easily felt as a loss of the cause for laughter. The loss of wordplay can happen for many reasons,

and these are for example 1) language-specific constraints, meaning that the presence of “untranslatable” elements do not have linguistic equivalents in the target language, 2) media-specific constraints, linked with the type of language transfer, here subtitling, and finally 3) human constraints, for example a lack of talent, interest, or experience in the translator, time pressure, lack of reassurances and so on. A fourth possible factor is norms in the target culture. (Gottlieb 1997: 216) Norms can be defined as the general values or shared ideas within a community. Norms indicate what is right and what is wrong, and they instruct people for what is prescribed and what is forbidden to do, what is tolerated and permitted in a certain situation. Norms indicate what is culturally inappropriate and appropriate. (Toury 2012: 63) There are two groups of norms and they are preliminary and operational norms. Preliminary norms deal with two main sets of considerations. These are the ones that regard the existence and actual nature of translation policy, and the ones that are related to the directness of translation. Operational norms in turn are norms that direct the decisions that are made during the translation act itself. These norms affect the linguistic material and the verbal expression of the translation. (Toury 2012: 82)

Homophony is often considered to be too language-specific to be preserved in the translation. Two specific words that sound the same in any source text will possibly sound more different in any target language. (Gottlieb 1997: 218) This is the case with the material in this thesis as well. In this example of homophony from the material, Phil is showing a house to a couple and the man is a drummer.

- (7) The male customer to his wife: You knew the rules when you married a drummer.
 Phil: Ba dum-ts.
 Female customer: Are we keeping you from something?
 Phil: Not one **beat**. (S7 E15)

In this scene Phil makes a reference to drumming by saying “beat”, but also meaning that they are not keeping him from somewhere “one bit”, which means “not at all”. The word

“beat” and “bit” sound alike, and it is easy to make these kinds of homophones in English, but in Finnish we do not have a counterpart that would be suitable for this. “Ei yhtään biittiä” would be the direct translation, but it would not have the same effect than the original, where the two words sound alike. The real translation of this scene is “Ei sinne päinkään”, which would mean “Not even close” or “Not at all”.

4.2 Cultural issues

Translators need also a bi-cultural vision in addition to their bilingual ability. Translators try to overcome the problems they face between different cultures, the conflicts that are in the way of transferring a meaning to another language. (Hatim & Mason 1990: 223 quoted in Pettit 2009: 44) A cultural sign is a sign that contains culture-specific information and it can be verbal or nonverbal, transmitted aurally or visually. In a subtitled version the viewer has access to the original soundtrack, so two different linguistic systems operate simultaneously. (Pettit 2009: 44)

Translators usually come across with three basic categories of translation problems. These are 1) highly *culture-specific references* such as place names, references to sports and festivities, famous people, monetary systems, institutions and so on, 2) *language-specific features* such as terms of address, taboo language, and 3) areas of *overlap between language and culture* such as songs, rhymes and jokes. (Chiaro 2009: 155) These are explained in more detail in the following subchapter.

4.2.1 Culture specific references

These are entities that are typical in one particular culture. There are many examples of these references: 1) institutions (also judiciary, police, military) that can be legal formulae, courtroom expressions and forms, legal topography and agents, 2) educational references to “high school” culture, tests, grading systems, sororities, cheer leaders and so on, 3) place names, for example districts and street names, 4) units of measurement;

ounces, pounds and yards, 5) monetary systems as in dollar, soles and pounds, 6) national sports and pastimes such as American football, baseball, and basketball teams, 7) food and drink such as Mississippi Mud Pie, pancakes and so on., 8) holidays and festivities, for example Thanksgiving, Chinese New Year, Halloween and St. Patrick's day, 9) books, films and TV programmes, such as Brady Brunch, and finally 10) celebrities and personalities such as Ringo Starr, Toppy and The Cookie Monster. (Chiaro 2009: 156–157)

Typical examples are the school and measuring systems. Especially if translating from English and especially from the American culture. They have a grading system from F to A, as in Finland it is numbers from 4 to 10, when talking about elementary school, junior high school, and high school. The translator has to take these kinds of issues into consideration, since the grade A cannot be translated into Finnish as A. Even though many Finnish people are familiar with the grades in America, these kinds of culture specific items need to be translated to correspond the target language. This applies to measurements as well, since in America the metric system is not in use, their measurements cannot be left into the translation as they are, but again, need to be changed to the corresponding ones. For example, a mile, that is 1,6 kilometres, needs to be altered to kilometres in the target language. And the translator needs to pay attention to these issues, since two miles cannot be translated into two kilometres, since it is more than three kilometres. Similarly the measurement in cooking and baking need special attention because they differ between America and Finland as well.

4.2.2 Language-specific features

These features such as accent, variety and slang usually disappear in subtitles. The translator can in some way mark the speech of the character who speaks differently, so the reader will understand that the words are different from one person. Also features such as politeness and forms of address create problems in subtitling. In English there is the form “you” that is used for addressing everyone, a single person, a group, an older person and so on. In English they do not distinct between “sinä” and “te” such as we in

Finnish use different words for “you” depending to whom we are talking. In addition to these, translators also have to deal with “taboo” language, language what some people consider to be offensive, as discussed above. (Chiaro 2009: 158–160)

4.2.3 Areas of overlap between language and culture

Finally we come to *songs, rhymes, metaphors, allusions, idiomaticity* and *verbally expressed humour*. Chiaro (2009: 162) reminds that these features are extremely problematic and have been labelled as fuzzy, since they cross strictly linguistic features with cultural references. Songs often play a part in the plot and they either can be included in the subtitles or they can be omitted. Verbally expressed humour is very difficult to translate as well, as is already been discussed in this thesis.

4.3 Netflix’s own requirements for subtitling

Netflix has its own restrictions and limitations for the subtitles. Netflix has general requirements but also requirements for different languages, so we will also look at the requirements of Finnish subtitles. (Netflix Partner Help Center 2020) Some of these requirements are covered in the following subchapters.

4.3.1 General requirements for subtitling

The minimum duration of the subtitle is the same as is mentioned earlier in this thesis, 5–6 seconds. The maximum duration is 7 seconds. The subtitles can only use the font and characters from the NETFLIX Glyph List. Two lines of subtitles is the maximum amount also in Netflix. When the text is put into two lines it should follow certain rules: the line should be broken after punctuation marks, before conjunctions and before prepositions. The line break should not separate a noun from an article or from an adjective, a first name from a last name, a verb from a subject pronoun, a prepositional verb from its preposition or a verb from an auxiliary, reflexive pronoun, or negation. The subtitles

should be located at the bottom of the screen and centered in Netflix as well, and they should overlap any onscreen text. The translator should include all subtitles that are relevant to the plot and to on-screen text that is not covered in the dialogue, such as “Based on True Events” etc. Netflix says that currency should not be converted in the subtitles, which seems quite odd considering it is a cultural reference and all culture specific elements should be transferred to match the target language. However, I actually noticed this while watching a series from Netflix that currency in fact was not translated. In addition, brand names might be used as the same as the English-language brand name if it is widely known, but a subtitler can also use a generic term for a brand. (Netflix Partner Help Center 2020)

4.3.2 Requirements for Finnish subtitles in Netflix

Netflix has listed various language specific requirements for the Finnish subtitles. There are quite many of them, so only the most important ones are covered here. First let us look at abbreviations. For instance, *herra* should be *hra*, *rouva*= *rva*, *neiti*= *nti*, *professori*= *prof*, *tohtori*= *tri* and so on. Acronyms should be written without periods between the letters, such as BBC or USA. The limitation for characters per line is maximum 42. In the Finnish subtitles the proper names should not be translated, but leave them as they are (Peter, Suzanne for example). Nicknames should only be translated if they have a specific meaning. The subtitler should use language specific translations for historical or mythical characters. A hyphen should be used when the sentence on the screen is split between two or more continuous subtitles unless there is punctuation. For example:

- 1) Subtitle 1 Hän opetti minulle –
 Subtitle 2 paljon mahtavia juttuja.
- Subtitle 1 Odotin innolla,
 Subtitle 2 että näkisin sinut taas.

Ellipsis can be used to indicate an interruption or trail off, for example if the sentence does not continue in the next subtitle. Or, it can be used when a subtitle starts mid-sentence.

2) Subtitle 1 -Olin sanomassa...

Subtitle 2 -En halua tietää!

The translator should use a hyphen without a space to indicate two speakers in one subtitle for the second line only, and the maximum of one character speaking per one line.

3) Se ei ole valmis.

-Mikä?

The font style in Finnish subtitles should be Arial, the font size should have the ability to fit 42 characters, and the colour of the font is always white. When there is on-screen text that overlaps with the dialogue, the subtitler should focus on the relevant one. The duration of the Finnish subtitles should imitate the on-screen text as much as possible. Interrupting a line with a forced narrative needs to be avoided. Yet, if it is impossible, the translator can use ellipsis at the end of the sentence that is before the narrative and also at the beginning of the following sentence.

4) Subtitle 1 Meidän ei pitäisi...

Subtitle 2 (FN) PÄÄSY KIELLETTY

Subtitle 3 ...jatkaa pidemmälle

Foreign dialogue should only be translated if it is meant to be understood by the viewer and it was subtitled in the original version as well. Italics should be used in album, book, film and programme titles, foreign words, phone or television dialogue, voice-overs, song lyrics, and when the speaker is not on the screen. Numbers from 1–10 should be written out *yksi, kaksi, kolme*, etc. and numbers above that should be written numerically *11, 12*,

13 etc. However, when a number begins a sentence, it should always be written out. Nonetheless, these rules can be broken due to the limitations of the space for instance. In addition, the subtitle should use space to separate thousands, use a comma for decimals and use a full stop with times, for example *kello 7.45*, not *7:45 AM*. Measurements should be converted to the metric system as discussed also above. The reading speed for adult programmes should be 17 characters per second. If a character repeats words more than once in the same sentence they should not be translated. Songs should only be subtitled if they are relevant to the plot and the rights are granted for that. Main titles that are on-screen should not be translated, and episode titles should not be subtitled if they do not appear on the screen. The word “you” should not be translated literally (*sinä*) if it is meant to be a general statement to mean “one” or “anybody”. (Netflix Partner Help Center 2020) These rules are of course visible in the translation of puns as well for the translator needs to consider all the rules and restrictions when translating a pun. However, as we discussed above, the translators in Netflix may not be professionals so it is possible that they are not aware with all the other rules that translators need to think about, for example the cultural issues in more detail. However, these rules of Netflix are very specific and cover many issues so they should be sufficient enough.

4.4 Translating humour

José Veiga (2009: 160–161) argues that humour is a living organism which continually engages new procedures and evolves through time. Diaz Cintas (2003: 253 quoted in José Veiga 2009: 163) says that it is true that humour is a social feeling, and it is different and distinct in each society. Different cultures conceptualise humour in different ways and find the comic effect in different situations than other cultures. When translating humour, to preserve the effect and to make the audience laugh can be challenging, because even though the translator would know the language perfectly, the cultural differences may be a crucial factor and the translation does not make the audience laugh. (Chiaro 1992: 77 quoted in José Veiga 2009: 163)

In films or television series, humour and laughter may always not be related, and laughter is not considered an exclusive result of humorous stimulus. The relationship between laughter and humour can be two-fold. Firstly, humour and laughter can occur almost simultaneously, meaning that laughter is the reaction to a humorous effect. Secondly, because humour is a mental phenomenon, it should not be immediately identified with laughter, since laughter can also be caused by other triggers than humour, such as tickling or intoxication. Even if humour does not result in laughter it can still give a positive, pleasant and happy mindset or sense of well-being. Obviously, individuals are amused by different things and different situations. (José Veiga 2009: 160–162)

Therefore, humour differs between individuals, contexts and cultures. In these cases substitutions and adaptation can be used. When subtitling humour, both substitution and adaptation must take into consideration all the linguistic, non-linguistic, and referential and technical limitations that are involved. (José Veiga 2009: 163–164) In subtitling, the target text usually includes less words than the source text. Subtitled humour normally contains much less words, so it is possible that it can give the target audience a feeling of loss in translation (José Veiga 2009: 164). Toury (2012: 23) points out that translations are cultural facts of a target culture and continues to say that there is no way that a translation could share the same systemic space with the original, not even when they are present side by side. This is true as even though the translation of the source text would be literal, the words can be longer or shorter in the target text, the order of the words can be different and so on, so it is nearly impossible for the translations to be *exactly* the same, even though the meaning would be preserved.

The translator should aim to equivalence when translating from a language to another. This means that the translator needs to create the humorous effect of the source language into the target language, in the way that the same effect is experienced in the target audience. Sometimes in these cases the translator needs to use recontextualization. This can consist of totally or partially abandoning the literal, propositional or locutionary level, where locution is the word or phrase used by people in particular area or group (Macmillan dictionary 2020), while maintaining the illocutionary act as far as possible,

which relates to action performed by saying something and also having a meaning (Macmillan thesaurus 2020), and still focusing on the perlocutionary effect, which means the effect the terms used by a speaker can have on another speaker and their emotions and responses (Ilmainen Sanakirja 2020) directly or accurately reproducing it. (Hickey 1998: 222 quoted in José Veiga 2009: 166) Likewise, the translator dealing with humour needs to know how to use different narrative strategies, adapt humour for a target group, be aware that not all items in a source language are translatable, be sensitive to the context in which the programme will be seen and try to restrain from changing a script opposition. (José Veiga 2009: 168) There are many possibilities to translate humour, and puns, and from this we can move on to look at the translation strategies offered by Delabastita.

4.5 Delabastita's translation strategies for puns

I use Delabastita's translation strategies in the analysis of the material. The strategies help to see what is actually done to the translation of the wordplay in the episodes of *Modern Family*. Delabastita (1996: 134) has defined several changes that can take place in a pun in translation. Although there are eight of these changes, only the first 4 of them are used in the material of the thesis. The strategies are as follows:

1. *Pun* → *pun* means that the pun is translated to a pun in the target language that reminds more or less the source language pun. The target language pun can differ by its semantic form or textual function or by its linguistic mechanism. (Delabastita 1996: 134) In this example Phil is at a realtors' event and he is on the stage telling jokes about the other realtors.

- (8) Original: Mark recently moved into a **new model... How are you Francine?**

Subtitle: Mark vaihtoi hiljattain **uuteen malliin. Mitä kuuluu, Francine?**

(S2 E4)

This is an example of homonymy which is translated with using the strategy *pun* → *pun*. In this scene the word “model” has a double meaning. Phil first makes the people believe that Mark has changed a model of his car, but then goes on to mention his girlfriend (who indeed may be a model, or the word is just a reference). This translation fills its purpose since it is literal and means exactly the same than the original one. The word “malli” in Finnish can also mean many different things, such as the model of cars, or the career as a model and so on. Hence, the translator has preserved the humour.

2. *Pun* → *non-pun* is a strategy where the pun is translated by an expression that does not contain a pun. However, it can still manage to preserve both senses of the pun or at least one of them. (Delabastita 1996: 134) In this example Phil is showing a house to a couple that his family likes and tries to convince them to move next door. Phil and Claire have a dinner with them, and they are telling Haley that they will see and hear about them soon, and after that Phil gets a text message from them.

(9) Original: Looks like someone didn't get their **phil of Dunphy**.

Subtitle: Joku ei tainnut saada **tarpeeksi Dunphyä**. (S6 E5)

This is an example of homophony that is translated with the strategy *pun* → *non-pun*. There is no pun in the translation since it might be difficult to translate because Phil is again using his own name in the pun instead of the word “fill”. The pun is successful in English but is difficult to preserve in Finnish the same way. Even though the translation is not a pun, it is a suitable translation for the context and the message is preserved.

3. *Pun* → *related rhetorical device* means that the pun in the source text is translated with some other type of wordplay than a pun, such as alliteration, metaphor, irony, allusion etc. The translator has noticed there is a wordplay in the source text and creates it also in the target text. (Delabastita 1996: 134) This strategy was used only once in the material, so see example 20 from the analysis (p. 51).

4. *Pun* → *zero* is when the part including a pun is omitted altogether. (Delabastita 1996: 134). This strategy is not present in the material.

5. *Pun ST* → *pun TT* happens when the source language pun is transferred as it is into the target language, so it is not translated (Delabastita 1996: 134). In the below example Phil is thinking about playing his old banjo because he thought Claire loved it but then she tells the truth that she actually hated it.

(10) Original: But you called me **Banjovi**.

Subtitle: Mutta kutsuit minua **Banjoviksi**. (S6 E18)

This paronymy is not exactly translated, but the pun in the source language is transferred as it is into the target language. Here Phil refers to Bon Jovi, and the translation is the same as the original, so it works in Finnish as well.

These next three strategies are not presented in the material:

6. *Non-pun* → *pun* is when the translator creates a pun in the TT when there was no pun at all in the ST (Delabastita 1996: 134).

7. *Zero* → *pun* means that the translator adds totally new text material to the translation that includes wordplay. The translator might have no justification to the wordplay in the ST but can use it as a compensatory device. (Delabastita 1996: 134)

8. *Editorial techniques* can include forewords, notes and so on, to give more information about the translation of a wordplay (Delabastita 1996: 134).

Gottlieb (1997: 210) has also provided translation strategies. They are quite similar to Delabastita's strategies, but Gottlieb makes clear that they are related to subtitling. He says that in subtitling a wordplay can be "rendered verbatim" with or without the humorous effect. Wordplay can be adapted to the local settings, but so that the humour is

preserved. It can also be replaced by an expression that is not at all wordplay, or it could not be rendered “using the space for neighbouring dialogue”, and finally, wordplay can be inserted in different textual positions, where the target language makes it possible. In the analysis of this thesis Delabastita’s strategies were chosen since his categorization suits the design of this study better. In the next part of the thesis the puns found in *Modern Family* are presented and analysed using these translation strategies.

5 PHIL'S PUNS IN *MODERN FAMILY*

In the material of the thesis, the four seasons of *Modern Family* (seasons 2, 5, 6, 7), I found 40 puns uttered by Phil. I chose to study the puns of Phil only, because he uses them abundantly and they are sometimes very clever. He uses his own name in the puns occasionally where another word sounds like Phil, such as *feel* for instance. My aim in this thesis was to discover what translation strategies are used in translating the puns and how do the English and Finnish puns differ from each other, and whether the humour is preserved in the subtitles and how. My hypothesis was that most of the puns are not translated to puns, but in the way that the humour of the original is preserved in the subtitles in some way as well.

I categorized the puns found in *Modern Family* to homophony, homonymy, homography, paronymy, recursive pun and nonce word. Homonymy occurs when words are spelled and pronounced in the same way, but they have different meanings. Homophony means that words have different spelling, but their pronunciation is the same. Homography on the other hand is a situation where words are different in pronunciation or are verb – noun pairs for example, but they have the same spellings, but different meanings. In paronymy the words are almost but not quite similar in spelling and pronunciation. (Delabastita 1993: 79) Recursive pun is a pun where one needs to understand the first part of the joke to be able to understand the second one (Literary Devices 2020). Nonce word is a word coined and used to suit one particular occasion only, but it is not adopted into use generally (Merriam-Webster 2020). The pun used the most in my material was nonce word and the least used pun was homography. In this section, I will provide examples of each of the categories of the puns.

To see what is done to the pun in the translation, I use Delabastita's translation strategies that were mentioned earlier in the thesis. The ones that are found in the material are pun → pun, pun → non-pun, pun → related rhetorical device and pun ST → pun TT. Pun → pun means that the pun is translated with a pun also in the target language, however it can differ somehow but preserves the humour in any case. Pun → non-pun means that there

is not actually a pun in the translation, but the same message is still preserved with one way or the other. Pun ST → pun TT is when the pun is not actually translated but transferred as it is into the target language. And finally, pun → related rhetorical device means that the original pun is translated using other kinds of verbal humour such as metaphor or rhyming. (Delabastita 1996: 134) I will provide examples of each category of these strategies as well. The structure of the analysis is that under the categories of puns I will present examples from the material that are translated with different strategies of Delabastita. I present more than one example of each of these strategies to indicate how the different puns with same translation strategies are translated. In the examples S is used for season and E is used for episode.

Table 1. The number of puns in each category in the material

Pun	Number found in the material
Homonymy	9
Homophony	7
Homography	1
Nonce word	10
Recursive pun	4
Paronymy	9
Total	40

Table 1 presents the number of puns in each of the categories that were found in the material. In total there were 40 puns uttered by Phil, and nonce word is the most used pun since it occurred 10 times in the material. Homonymy and paronymy come second and they are both used 9 times. Homophony is used 7 times and recursive pun occurred in 4 cases. Homography is the least used pun since it only appeared once in the material.

Table 2. The amount of translation strategies used in each of the puns

Pun	pun → pun	pun → non-pun	pun ST → pun TT	pun → related rhetorical device
Homonymy	6	3		
Homophony	1	4	1	1
Homography	1			
Nonce word	5		5	
Recursive pun	4			
Paronymy	6	2	1	
Total	23	9	7	1

Table 2 presents the amount of translation strategies that are used within each pun. Only four of the eight categories of Delabastita were used in the material. We can see from the table that the strategy pun → pun is the most used strategy and it occurred 23 times in total and it was used the most in homonymy and paronymy since in both of these it is used 6 times. In nonce word the strategy pun → pun occurred the second most, 5 times. This means that most of the puns are translated with a pun and preserved the humour and the message of the original. The second most used strategy was pun → non-pun since it occurred 9 times in total. In some cases with this strategy the humour is possible to preserve. Mostly the strategy pun → non-pun lost the humour of the pun in the material, however. Out of 9 cases of this strategy 8 of the puns lost the humour. The humour was mainly lost in homophony and homonymy with this strategy since both categories lost the humour in three cases. Two of the cases with lost humour with pun → non-pun were paronymy. The one case that preserved the humour, was a homophony. Pun ST → pun TT is used 7 times in total and this also indicates that the humour is preserved in these

cases since the translation using this strategy is always the same as the original. The strategy pun → related rhetorical device was the least used strategy and only one instance of that appeared in the material and it was used in homophony. All in all, humour is mainly preserved in the puns, and no puns or lines were omitted altogether, even though some of them lost their humour. Next, I will present examples of each of these categories of puns.

5.1 Homonymy

The first example here is a homonymy that is translated using the strategy **pun** → **pun**. In this episode Phil and his wife Claire are organizing the kitchen. They have many separated lids and containers on the table, and Phil picks one lid and one container and makes a pun.

(11) Original: He **blew his lid** when she tried to **contain him**.

Subtitle: Miehellä **paloi kansi**, kun nainen yritti **lokeroida häntä**.

[The man burnt his lid when the woman tried to label him] (S2 E2)

Here, the translator has preserved the humour and the translation contains a pun as well. Hence, the strategy used is pun → pun. The translation is almost literal, and it has managed to preserve the joke and the same meaning as in the original. The double meaning of the words “lid” and “container” are preserved in the translation, and this sentence could be said in Finnish as well in the same situation.

Claire is talking to Phil about the gutter cleaner that they have and that maybe they should use it, since it has been in a box for three weeks. Phil tells that he has given a name to the cleaner. This example is translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

(12) Original: Did I tell you I call it the **Gutter Done**?

Subtitle: Annoin sen nimeksi **Taisto P. Suri**.

[I named it Battle C. Leaner] (S5 E4)

Here the pun is preserved, and the translator has been clever and invented a humorous name for the gutter cleaner in Finnish. The translation is not quite equivalent with the Finnish word “räystäspesuri” that is used in the series (“gutter” meaning “räystäs”), however I believe the viewer gets the idea from the translation and will consider it humorous. “Taisto P. Suri” is pronounced like “Taisto pesuri”.

Phil is talking to a salesman in a dryer store because Cam did not receive the right dryer. Cam is the companion of Mitch who is Claire’s brother. The different people in the families spend a lot of time with each other and all are friends even though they would not be related as Cam and Phil. Phil says to the salesman that he is a realtor and recommends people where to buy their dryers. This scene has a translation strategy **pun** → **pun**.

- (13) Original: I sell houses to people every day who ask me where they should buy their dryer. I don’t think you want me giving them any...**static**?

Subtitle: [...] Ette kai halua heidän kanssaan mitään...**jännitettä**?

[You don’t want any... tension with them?] (S6 E11)

“Static” means the noise that an electronic device can make, and it means “kohina” in Finnish. Urban dictionary (2003) makes another suggestion, that static would mean “beef”, that is, to start a fight or a complaint with someone. This definition would suit this episode. So, there would be a double meaning of the word “static”, and it would mean the actual noise of the electronic device and also a beef with someone. The translation “jännite” is a very suitable word for this, since it refers to an electronic device, but it could also be an uncomfortable or awkward feeling with someone.

The family of Phil and Claire is on an airplane and Claire got a seat in the business class, while Phil did not. He says he does not understand why Claire is being negative since he

gave her a magical weekend in the woods, but he says he tries to be positive. After saying this, a suitcase falls to his head. This is translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

(14) Original: And then it **hit** me.

Subtitle: Silloin se **jysähti**.

[And then it thumped] (S6 E15)

This is a successful translation. Although it is not quite clear what the meaning of the source text is. It is possible that it means Phil realized something and then there is a double meaning because the suitcase hit him at the same time, or it could just be an expression for the fact that the suitcase actually hit him in the head, and the word is not related to realizing anything. Either way the translation is suitable here and fills its purpose.

The below example is a homonymy that is translated with the strategy **pun** → **non-pun**. Phil cannot find the fire alarm that beeps in their house because the battery is low, hence he thinks that he is not a man because he is unable to do this. The doorbell rings where there is one of Phil's wife's Claire's friends behind the door. Phil shakes hands with him but his hand is hurting because he burned it, and he also burned his pastries he was making. He tells he is sorry and that he burned his "lady fingers". This means his own fingers because he thinks he is not a man, but he was also baking "lady fingers" so he burned his "lady fingers". After this the alarm beeps again and Phil laughs nervously.

(15) Original: Oh, sorry, I burned my **lady fingers**.

Subtitle: Anteeksi! Poltin **savoiardini**.

[Sorry! I burnt my savoiards] (S2 E7)

In this case the humour is lost because the double meaning of the word "lady fingers" is not transferred into the translation. However, the double meaning of "lady fingers" would have been difficult to translate into Finnish literally. "Lady fingers" is a name of a pastry

in America, hence it cannot translate similarly into Finnish since we do not call them “lady fingers” but “savoiards” or “sokerikakkukeksi”. If the translation would be “Poltin naisen sormeni” or “poltin sokerikakkukeksini” the translation would still not have the double meaning and it would not make much sense. The translator has decided to translate the original expression with a corresponding word of the pastry in Finland while losing the pun.

Below is another example of homonymy that is translated with **pun** → **non-pun**. Phil does a magic trick where he pulls a coin out of Claire’s hair.

(16) Original: Promise me you’ll never...**change**.

Subtitle: Lupaa, ettet koskaan **muutu**.

[Promise you’ll never change] (S2 E24)

In this case the humour is lost as well. The case with homonymy is difficult since it is successful in the English language, but it is difficult to find counterparts or equivalent words or expressions in Finnish. Since “change” means a coin, and it is also a verb, the pun is successful in the English language.

In the below example Phil is looking for his charger in their home. Haley, Phil’s daughter, and her boyfriend Dylan are sleeping in Haley’s bed, and Phil does not feel comfortable with it. He goes to Haley’s room asking if they have taken the charger, but it is not there. And he feels like he has no power anymore over his daughter’s decisions or relationships. The translator has used the strategy **pun** → **non-pun** in this scene.

(17) Original: Guess I’ll just get used to not having any **power**.

Subtitle: Täytyy kai tottua siihen, että on **virrat vähissä**.

[I guess I’ll have to get used to the fact that the power is out] (S7 E3)

The double meaning of the word “power” is lost in the translation. Since “power” here indicated the actual electricity and the battery of the phone and also the power over his daughter’s decisions, it does not come clear in the translation since it only says that “virrat on vähissä” which refers only to the electricity part.

Homonymy occurred altogether 9 times in the material and in total the strategy pun → pun was used 6 times as can be seen in table 2. Therefore, homonymy preserved the humour 6 times out of 9 since the strategy pun → pun makes it possible. There were three cases translated with pun → non-pun, and all of these lost the humour in the translations of homonymy.

5.2 Homophony

Here is an example of homophony that is translated **pun** → **non-pun**. In this episode Phil explains to the camera that there is a realtors’ event coming up and he has been asked to host it this year because Gil Thorpe who has been the host earlier has a surgery.

(18) Original: ...so they’ve asked me to...*phil* in.

Subtitle: Joten hän pyysi minua **Phillaamaan** puolestaan.

[So he asked me to Phill in for him] (S2 E4)

The pun is preserved to a certain extent in this episode. “Phillaamaan” does not exactly mean anything in Finnish, but the translator has wanted to save the name of Phil as well in the Finnish version.

This example below is an example of the strategy **pun ST** → **pun TT** of homophony. Phil is playing a new video game and answers to Claire’s phone call.

(19) Original: What’s the best first-person shooter about genetically modified space marines? **Halo**.

Subtitle: Sano paras peli, jossa on geneettisesti muunneltuja avaruusmerisotilaita! **Halo!**

[Say the best same with genetically modified space marines? Halo!]
(S6 E16)

This is a literal translation and as a result the pun is preserved. The word “halo” here is a modified version of the word “hello” in English and “haloo” in Finnish, and it is also the name for the video game.

Here is an example of **pun** → **related rhetorical device**. Phil is comforting one of his single mom customers.

(20) Original: Diane, you’re not gonna **be alone**. You’re gonna **get a loan**.

Subtitle: Diane, **ei kaikki tässä ole paha**. Pankista **saa rahaa**.

[Diane, not everything here is bad. You get money from the bank] (S5 E3)

Here the translator has preserved the humour by making a rhyme. The translation does not exactly mean the same than the original, but it still manages to preserve the message of the original.

In the episode below Phil is talking to their kids about not quitting. This scene included two cases of different puns, so this episode is divided into two parts and this part is homophony. This part is translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

(21) Original: I haven’t sold a house all month. Do you see me saying, “**I’m done**”? **Never. Because there is no “done” in “Dunphy”.**

Subtitle: En ole myynyt taloa koko kuussa. **Dumppaanko duunini? En. Koska Dunphyt ei dumppaa.**

[I haven’t sold a house whole month. Am I going to dump my job? No. Because Dunphy’s don’t dump.] (S5 E9)

Phil says that there is no “done” in Dunphy, while there actually is since “done” and the “Dun” in the name “Dunphy” are pronounced similarly. They are, however, written differently so that might have been Phil’s meaning. Nevertheless, the translation preserves the humour with “Dunphyt ei dumppaa” and it actually is a clever translation since “Dunphy” does not include the word “dumppaa”, so the meaning is preserved in the translation.

In homophony the humour is lost 3 times in total with the strategy pun → non-pun. The strategy occurred 4 times, and only one instance of this strategy managed to preserve the humour. In homophony there are all the different translation strategies used, and in addition to pun → non-pun they are all used one time as is indicated in table 2. All of the other strategies preserved the humour.

5.3 Homography

This is an example that is included already earlier in the thesis. However, since the number of homographs in the material was very little, this episode is included into this analysis part as well. This is an example of the translation strategy **pun** → **pun**. In this episode Phil is comforting her customer, one of the single moms.

- (22) Original: Lorraine, you are a beautiful woman with a lot to **offer... Should we make an offer?**

Subtitle: Lorraine, olet kaunis nainen, jolla on paljon **tarjottavaa. Tarjotaanko** siis?

[Lorraine, you are a beautiful woman who has a lot to offer. So let’s offer?] (S5 E3)

The translation of this episode is literal, and it means exactly the same thing as the original. The strategy is pun → pun for this reason, and because nothing is omitted.

As can be seen in the tables 1 and 2, homography is the least used pun in the material, since only one instance of that occurred. Homography has managed to preserve the humour in the translation.

5.4 Nonce word

Here the nonce word has been translated with **pun** → **pun**. Phil and Gloria go to the store where Auntie Alice is selling sauces and they think that she stole Gloria's sauce recipe. Gloria is Jay's wife and is a good friend with Phil.

(23) Original: Hello, Auntie-Alice ...Or should she say, **auntie Malice**?

Subtitle: Vai pitäisikö sanoa **ilkeä täti**?

[Or should I say mean auntie?] (S7 E20)

The pun is preserved in this translation. Even though Alice and Malice sound the same and "Alice-täti" and "ilkeä täti" do not, the pun is still there since the word "malice" means "ilkeys" in Finnish, hence the meaning of the original is preserved.

In the example below Haley and Alex do not want to go to Luke's football game. Phil is wondering why they are not eager to go. The translator has used the strategy **pun** → **pun** in this scene.

(24) Original: Geez, I've never seen such a bunch of **no-getters**.

Subtitle: Olette maailman **nollanhimoisin joukko**.

[You are the world's most zero lusted team] (S5 E9)

In this scene the nonce word is "no-getters". "Go-getter" means that a person is active and does not give up on things. Here the kids seem like they are not enthusiastic at all to go to Luke's game, so Phil uses the expression "go-getter" by changing it to "no-getter".

The translation preserves the humour, hence this is a successful translation. “Go-getter” could be translated with the word “voitonhimoinen” and the translator has decided to use “nollanhimoinen” which is a clever translation and is the opposite of “voitonhimoinen” which is the point here.

In this episode below Phil is telling the camera about the fact he is doing great at work and single moms are his new customers. In here the translator has used the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

(25) Original: You might say I’ve hit the **single motherload**.

Subtitle: Voisi sanoa, että olen iskenyt **sinkkuäitisuoneen**.

[You might say I hit the single mother vain] (S5 E3)

“Motherload” means “kultasuoni” in Finnish, so this translation is literal and preserves the message of the original. “Kultasuoni” means a very large amount of something valuable and that is exactly what Phil means here, since he has a gotten a great amount of single mom customer which means his career is going really well.

In this episode Claire is in the garage and found some old stuff of Luke’s, and Phil comes in. This scene is translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

(26) Original: Looks like you even dug out the **old news-zooka**.

Subtitle: Kaivoit jopa **vanhan uutissingon** esiin.

[You even dug out the old news-zooka] (S6 E8)

Here the word “old news-zooka” comes from the word “bazooka”, which is a weapon and in Finnish means “sinko”. This “old news-zooka” was an old t-shirt cannon that was made for Luke when he was delivering newspapers as a job, and it actually looks like a bazooka. The translation “uutissinko” fills its purpose since it has the same meaning than “news-zooka.”

Phil is again at a realtors' event but has no host, so he introduces himself to the stage. In this scene there is used the translation strategy **pun** → **pun**.

(27) Original: He puts the "tude" in **Tudor**.

Subtitle: Häneltä löytyy "tuudia" **Tudorien aikaiseen**.

[He's got the "tude" for the Tudor's time] (S5 E16)

This was quite difficult to analyse since the meaning of the word "tude" was difficult to find. This is a nonce word since "tude" does not really mean anything. It could mean "attitude" and "Tudor" is an era. So they are not quite related to each other, and it is unclear what does this "tude in Tudor" mean. In the translation, "tuudia" does not mean anything either. "Tudorien aikaiseen" fits the era of Tudor, however.

The scene below is an example of the translation strategy **pun ST** → **pun TT**. In this episode Phil is exercising in an elliptical machine and is facing backwards in it.

(28) Original: You know what? It's actually easier this way! Wonder if you can patent a movement? Call it **Philiptical**...

Subtitle: Tiedätkö mitä? Se on helpompaa näin! Voikohan liikkeen patentoida? Se voisi olla **philiptinen**...

[You know what? It is easier this way! Is it possible to patent a movement? It could be Philiptical...] (S5 E10)

This is a literal translation of the pun. It fills its purpose well in Finnish as well since we also use the word "elliptinen", thus the meaning is clear for the viewer.

In the scene below Luke and Haley are fighting, and Phil tells Luke to go water the garden and Haley to disappear for a minute. Haley answers to this "not like you could help with that" referring to his magician skills, and Phil is hurt. Here the pun is translated using the strategy **pun ST** → **pun TT**.

(29) Original: **Abracadauch**.

Subtitle: **Abracadauts.**

[Abracadauch] (S6 E1)

This translation of the pun is literal, and it has the same meaning that the source text. Hence, the pun here is preserved.

There is an event that Cam usually entertains as a clown, but Phil is doing it this time instead. The clown's name is Fizbo. This nonce word is translated with the strategy **pun ST** → **pun TT**.

(30) Original: Who needs a Fizbo if you can have a **Philbo**?

Subtitle: Kuka kaipaa Fizboa, kun voi saada **Philboa**?

[Who misses a Fizbo when you can get Philbo?] (S7 E14)

The pun in this scene is preserved since the translation of “Philbo” is literal. The translation preserves the same meaning as the original.

In this episode Phil and Lily, who is Cam and Mitch's daughter, are building a village for ducklings that Phil found. In here the translator has used the strategy **pun ST** → **pun TT**.

(31) Original: I drew up plans for **Duckingham Palace**, but I can't find them, so I guess we'll just have to wing it.

Subtitle: Piirsin jo **Duckinghamin palatsin** pohjapiirustukset, mutta hukkasin ne, joten pitää vain improvisoida.

[I already drew the plans for the Duckingham palace, but I lost them, so we just have to improvise] (S7 E4)

Here the “Duckingham palace” is a nonce word from “Buckingham palace”. In the translation “Duckinghamin palatsi” is a literal translation so it has preserved its meaning.

Nonce word was the most used pun in the material since it occurred 10 times. In all of the cases of nonce word the humour is preserved because they all are translated with either the strategy pun ST → pun TT (5 times) or pun → pun (5 times) which means they are translated either literally or with a pun.

5.5 Recursive pun

Here is an example of recursive pun that is translated using the strategy **pun** → **pun**. In this episode Phil explains to the camera that he comes from a family where there is and has been many dancers.

- (32) Original: I come from a long line of dancing **Dunphys – a kick line, actually.**

Subtitle: Kuulun tanssivien **Dunphyjen pitkään sukuun – sukuun, jossa on potkua.**

[I belong to a long family of dancing Dunphys – family with a kick]

(S5 E11)

The definition of “a kick line” is a long line of girls dancing and kicking their feet up in the air. A “long line” can also possibly mean the family line. So, there is a double meaning in the expression “long line”. In the first part Phil means that the family has a long line, but in the other part he refers to dancing and a kick line, which makes the reader realize he means they are dancing in a line. The translation preserves the meaning of the original, since in a kick line, you are kicking your feet up in the air.

Phil is showing a house with Luke and tells him that soon he is ready to leave. They were going to go to a trampoline park after that. Here the translator has used the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

- (33) Original: The deal's in the bag, kid. I'm just gonna wrap it up and then we **bounce**. And then we **bounce**.

Subtitle: Kauppa on valmis. Sinetöin sen, niin mennään. Ja sitten pompitaan.

[The deal is done. I will seal it, so we can go. And then we bounce]
(S7 E2)

The word “bounce” is used here in two different senses. The first means that they will leave, and the other means that they will actually bounce, that is, to jump up and down on a trampoline. “Bounce” means that you move in an energetic manner (Cambridge Dictionary 2020). For example one would “bounce off” from bed. The translator has used the word “mennään” which sounds quite boring considering the fact that one would be energetic. However, the meaning is still preserved, and it means that they leave. The other translation for “bounce” is “pompitaan” which is literal. As a result, the pun here is preserved. The pun rises in this episode from the fact that they are going to a trampoline park after the open house, and Phil says “then we bounce” which would mean they go to jump on the trampoline park, but then he uses the word “bounce” second time, and then he actually means that they go jumping.

On the below scene Luke does not want to go to his football game since one kid in the team is always making fun of him. Phil says that they are just jealous. This pun is translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

- (34) Original: He's just jealous because you're the one who puts **points on the board**. Why? Because you run the **score board**.

Subtitle: Hän on kateellinen, koska saat **pisteitä tauluun**. Miksi? Koska olet **pisteenlaskija**.

[He is jealous because you get the points to the board. Why? Because you are the score counter] (S5 E9)

In this scene the humour arises from the second part of the sentence. The first one means that Luke would be a good player and gets a lot of scores, thus puts them to the board. However, the latter part explains that he puts the scores to the board physically, since his task is to write the scores on the board. This is a successful translation since it preserves the exact same message as the original.

Recursive pun has managed to preserve the humour in every case since all the 4 cases of it are all translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**. Recursive puns are easy to translate so that the humour is preserved because they are possible to translate literally, so then the humour is always preserved, and the meaning of the translation is the same as the original. So, these types of puns have been easy to transfer into Finnish.

5.6 Paronymy

This is an example of paronymy that has used the strategy **pun** → **pun**. Luke thinks they are going to an autopsy camp with Phil but actually Phil is taking him to a dancing class. Phil answers to Luke when he asks if he's right.

(35) Original: **Of corpse** you are.

Subtitle: **Leikkaisin** niin.

[I would cut so] (S5 E11)

This is a clever use of pun and the translation "leikkaisin niin" suits very well for the idea that they would be going to autopsy camp. "Leikkaisin niin" is changed from the expression "veikkaisin niin" but suited better with the original message.

Below is another example of paronymy that is translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**. Phil and Claire are talking about a French movie with Alex's school mate's parents.

(36) Original: Well, I guess it makes **deux of us**...

Subtitle: No, siinä meitä on **deux**.

[Well, there is deux of us] (S2 E12)

This is also a literal translation of the word “deux”. In English it makes sense since “deux” sounds quite alike with the word “two” and would again be difficult to translate into Finnish similarly, since the Finnish word for two is “kaksi”.

In the below example Claire starts to work at her father Jay’s closet company and Phil suggests an imitation she should do there. The pun is translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

- (37) Original: “Hey, you can hang your clothes in me”. Christopher **Walk-in-Closet**.

Subtitle: “Hei, ripustakaa takkinne minuun.” –Christopher, **Walkeneeko? Kaappi**.

[Hei, you can hang your coats in me. – Christopher, Walken? Closet.]

(S5 E2)

This pun is made out of the actor Christopher Walken. “Walken closet” here indicates walk-in-closet. In Finnish, the translation is quite odd, but it still has managed to preserve the pun and the translator has tried to be creative with it. Walk-in-closet is a normal expression in Finnish as well, or then we use the word “vaatehuone” (cloth room) which would not work in this translation if the meaning for the translation is to be humorous. “Walkeneeko?” indicates “valkeneeko” which in English would mean “do you get it?” and then the translator has put the word “kaappi” (closet) at the end.

In this episode below Phil has a feeling that he is not being a great dad. These puns in this scene are translated with the strategy **pun** → **pun**.

- (38) Original: I went from an A dad to an **F dad. Fail Dunphy. Phil Dun-fail. Failip Hum-fail Dun**...No, I had it before.

Subtitle: **Huippuisä hiipui. Surkea Dunphy. Phil Dumppi. Failannut Dumppi...** Ei, sitä käytettiin jo.

[Great dad went down. Sad Dunphy. Phil Dump. Failed Dump. No, we already had that] (S7 E15)

Here the translation is quite clever and preserves the meaning of the original. The humorous effect of the puns is preserved in the translations and they are suitable to the Finnish language.

This below example is translated by using the strategy **pun** → **pun**. This scene actually included two different kinds of puns, so the episode is in two parts and this is the latter part. Phil was talking to the kids about not quitting and they are frustrated with it.

(39) Original: The kids: Umph!

Phil: Hey, there is no “**umph**” in “**Dunphy**”. Different spelling.

Subtitle: The Kids: Hoh...

Phil: **Dunphyt ei hohottele.**

[Umph! Dunphys’ don’t umph.] (S5 E9)

In here the humour is managed to preserve since the kids say “hoh” in the translation and Phil answers “Dunphyt ei hohottele”. The translation is different from the original, but it still has the same meaning and effect as the original.

Phil is showing a house to a couple and he is joking that they should already pay for him. In here the translator has used the strategy **pun** → **non-pun**.

(40) Original: I’m kidding. You don’t pay me directly. There is no **fee** in **Dun-Phil**.

Subtitle: Vitsi. Ette maksa sitä minulle. **Dunphy ei maksua huoli.**

[Joke. You do not pay it to me. Dunphy does not accept the payment]

(S5 E9)

Here the humour is lost. In this scene Phil uses “dun-phil” because there actually would be a “fee” in Dunphy. However, the message of the original is still preserved in the translation even though the translation does not have the exact same meaning.

Phil goes to visit Alex on campus and is knocking on her door and greets her. This paronymy is translated with the strategy **pun** → **non-pun**.

(41) Original: What’s the most dangerous type of uranium cake? -**Yellow!**

Subtitle: Millainen uraanikakku on kaikkein vaarallisinta? **Keltainen!**

[What type of uranium cake is the most dangerous? -Yellow!] (S7 E11)

The pun in this scene does not work in Finnish. Phil makes the pun so he could say hello to Alex but in a humorous way. “Yellow” sounds like “hello”, but the translation “keltainen” is not humorous, although it is a literal translation. However, it is not a pun as in the original version, and the humour is lost in this scene.

So, in two of the cases with paronymy the humour was lost when used the strategy **pun** → **non-pun**. All the other 7 cases of paronymy used **pun** → **pun** so they have preserved the humour.

All in all, mostly the humour was preserved in the translations of puns, which could already be seen in table 2. The most used translation strategy was **pun** → **pun**, which indicates that most of the puns were translated actually with puns. It was used mainly in nonce word, homonymy and paronymy. The other translation strategies preserved the humour in most cases as well. Next, I will present some concluding thoughts for this thesis.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I studied the translation of puns in the Finnish subtitles of the American comedy series *Modern Family*. My aim was to analyse how the puns are translated into Finnish and how they differ from the original, and what strategies are used when translating them. My research questions were: 1) In what way the humour is preserved in the target language and in how many cases, if preserved at all? 2) What kind of translation strategies are used when translating the puns? My hypothesis was that most of the puns are not translated directly with puns, but in the way that they still manage to preserve the humour into certain extent.

I focused only on one of the main characters in the series, Phil Dunphy. I chose to focus only on him because he uses puns the most and makes clever puns using his own name in there occasionally. The material consisted of the seasons 2, 5, 6 and 7 and I watched them on Netflix. After gathering the original English puns from the episodes, I gathered the Finnish translations. The original puns were categorized into homonymy, homophony, homography and paronymy, nonce word and recursive pun. I compared the English puns and the Finnish translations, and to see what was actually done to the puns in the translations I used Delabastita's translation strategies and they were as follows: pun → pun, pun → non-pun, pun ST → pun TT, and pun → related rhetorical device.

In the material of *Modern Family* there were 40 instances of puns uttered by Phil. Nonce word was the most used pun and it appeared 10 times in the material. Homonymy and paronymy came second and they were both used 9 times. Homophony occurred in 7 cases and recursive pun was used 4 times. The least used pun in the series was homography since it only appeared once. From Delabastita's translation strategies pun → pun was the most used strategy and it was used the most in paronymy and homonymy. Both of these puns were translated using this strategy 6 times. In the cases of pun → pun the original pun was translated with more or less a pun in the target language as well, preserving the humour. In nonce word this strategy was used the second most, 5 times in total. Consequently, pun → pun was used 23 times out of 40.

Pun → non-pun was the second most used strategy for it occurred 9 times in the puns in total. In homonymy it was used 3 times, in homophony 4 times and in paronymy 2 times. This strategy indicated that the pun in the original language is not translated with a pun in the target language but still manages to preserve the meaning of the original in some way. The humour in these cases can be preserved or lost. In most of the cases of this strategy in the material of *Modern Family* the humour was lost, and only in one instance of homophony the humour was preserved using this strategy. The humour was lost in homonymy and homophony the most using the strategy pun → non-pun since in both puns it was lost in three cases.

The strategy pun → related rhetorical device was used only once so it was the least used strategy. When using this strategy the translator has decided to translate the pun with other verbal humour such as rhyme, metaphor, allusion etc. This strategy in *Modern Family* managed to preserve the humour. In addition, in the strategy pun ST → pun TT the humour was always preserved as well since the translations were always the same as the original for the puns were transferred as they are into the translations. Hence, in these cases the puns were preserved.

So, my hypothesis that most of the puns are not translated with puns but preserve their humour in some way did not come true since the most used strategy was indeed pun → pun. This implies that the puns were actually translated with puns. Nevertheless, many of the other strategies preserved the humour and the puns as well in the translations as discussed above. Altogether the humour was preserved 32 times out of 40. From this pun → pun was used 23 times, so it is clear that the puns were translated with a pun 23 times out of 40, so the hypothesis that the puns would not be translated with puns is not true. Furthermore, only 8 of the puns lost the humour in total, so most of the puns preserved the humour in one way or the other. In addition to the fact that many of the puns were translated with puns, the humour is also preserved in the translations of the puns in the way that the translations are literal in many cases, especially in recursive puns and in nonce words and when using the strategy pun ST → pun TT. Additionally, the message

of the original is still preserved in most cases of the translations of the puns even though it would not be a pun exactly.

To examine this subject further, more seasons from the series could be chosen, or all of the main characters from the series and analyse what types of wordplay they use and what type of verbal humour is used the most in the series. One could also compare the translations in two different medias, for example in DVD and Netflix.

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